



## Diversity & Inclusion: Africa & Middle East Motorsport

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# Diversity & Inclusion

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## Africa & Middle East Motorsport





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## Overview

# Executive Summary

The issues of diversity and inclusion in motorsport have rarely been adequately addressed and the evidence of this is found amid the composition of those who compete in its respective disciplines, as well as produce and administer the sport in its various forms. In recent times a greater determination to make a meaningful difference in the under-representation of all minority groups, emerging from what might be regarded as non-traditional motorsport regions, has again surfaced.

This report, which is notable because it directly reflects the stated views of ASNs most adversely impacted by the continued absence of a coherent FIA-led plan to address their underrepresentation, highlights the importance of promoting diversity and inclusion agendas within motorsport, the critical role this plays in encouraging a greater number of young people to continue their involvement in it and the importance of offering a 'hand up' rather than a 'hand out' when facilitating a meaningful change in their lived experiences to date within motorsport.

### The key recommendations revolve around three areas

- Talent Identification and Support.
- The promotion of a STEM agenda in key target regions to promote involvement in motorsport in its widest sense.
- The establishment of a F1 Legacy fund in which a small percentage of the overall agreed fee paid by the event promoter would be 'ring fenced' to instigate and support a national motorsport development plan and, thereby, facilitate young nationals evolve from being mere spectators to become active participants in motorsport.



## Study

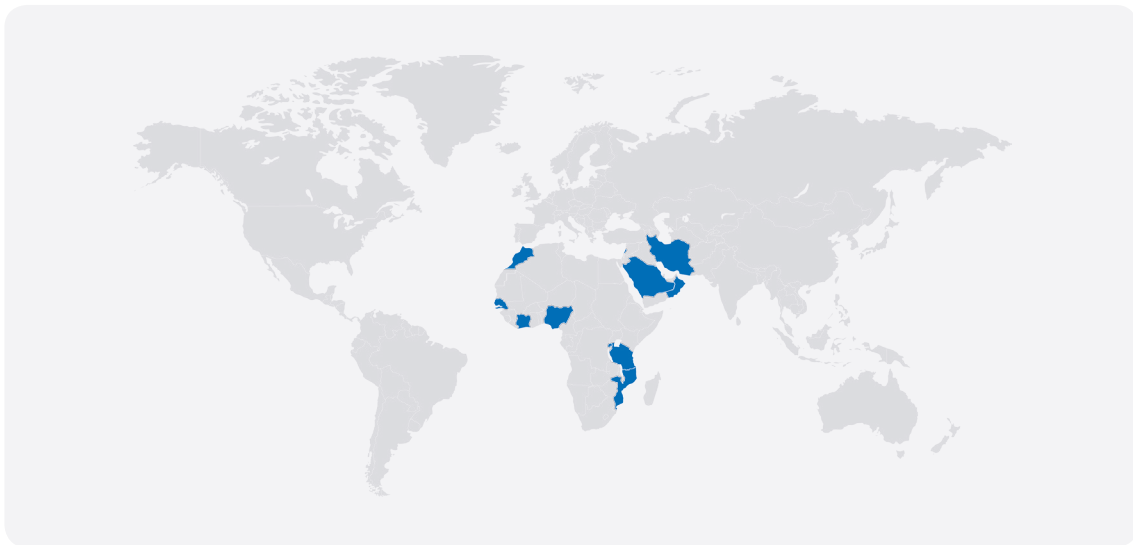
# Introduction

This study has been commissioned by EMSO President, Mohammed ben Sulayem to examine the issues surrounding Diversity and Inclusion in Motorsport in the Africa and Middle East Regions. The matter has been topical in recent times, largely on account of the comments of Formula 1 World Champion Lewis Hamilton and the subsequent commitment by the FIA and the Formula 1 promoter to jointly tackle and fund the issue. However, up to the end of 2020 no formal FIA research on the challenges or potential solutions to this issue has been put forward, not least to begin the process of working directly with those members most acutely impacted by the issues that have been highlighted. The present study seeks to address both issues via the FIA, who have a unique motorsport presence across both regions.

## Research

# Method

The research was conducted by Professor David Hassan from the University of Ulster, UK, and Dr Sean O'Connor from EMSO, both with long established track records in motorsport research. The research methods involved a review of the relevant literature and, critically, a survey of FIA member clubs across both regions.



The ASNs who took part in this research project (1 response = 1 ASN) were:

### Middle East and North Africa

Oman



Lebanon



Iran



Morocco



Bahrain



Saudi Arabia



### Africa

Nigeria



Senegal



Ivory Coast



Rwanda



Tanzania



Mozambique



## A Summary

# Diversity and Inclusion in Sport

Since the turn of the century the concepts of diversity and inclusion (D&I) have become pivotal issues for national policymakers and sport organizations. Political, economic, legislative, and social pressures, as well as (some) evidence that diversity can enhance organizational performance, have all contributed to a rising interest in the topic. As noted by Spaaij et al. (2014), in countries such as England, Australia, and more recently New Zealand, sport is one sphere where diversity and inclusion have become “policy buzz word[s]” (p. 347). For example, Sport England has embedded D&I principles in its 2016–2021 strategic plan, recognizing that “every part of the sporting landscape needs to change. And that includes us, our partners, and those we invest in” (p. 3).

In a similar vein, Australia’s Sport 2030 policy aims toward “a diverse and inclusive sport and physical activity sector that supports more Australians to be more active more often” (p. 3). Meanwhile, Sport New Zealand (2017d) states that “the bridging impact of sport participation does not occur organically and is dependent on providing equitable and safe options that are inclusive of the whole community” (p. 21). Several commentators argue that D&I are among the most significant issues confronting sport today. The terms ‘diversity and inclusion’ are typically deployed indistinctly and in tandem, referring to the promotion and appreciation of human differences, including but not limited to gender, race, sexual orientation, and physical ability.

It is important to better understand why (inter) national sport organizations (NSOs) – the FIA being an example – engage in D&I initiatives, how this commitment is translated into practice, what challenges, or difficulties they encounter, and what organizational practices may facilitate moving forward. The emphasis on NSOs is justified in the first instance as they represent the primary means of offering sporting opportunities and competition for residents of a country.

Whilst still largely built upon an instrumental view on diversity, Cunningham’s (2009) framework for examining the diversity-related change process in sport organizations represents a considerable development from earlier models.



Rather than assuming that diversity is there to be managed, he argues that sport organizations, are characterized by a “culture of similarity”, where those who are not members of the dominant group (i.e. white, upper to-middle class, heterosexual, able-bodied men) are actively or passively excluded (p. 409).

From here on, Cunningham (2009) draws on organization theory to suggest that environmental forces serve as the catalyst for diversity-focused transformations in sport organizations, a phenomenon called deinstitutionalization. This is followed by a three-stage change process. The first is issue identification, where organizations become aware of the need for diversity management and diversity is made a high priority. The change then enters the implementation stage, where structural and systemic changes are made. And finally, a maintenance stage, where changes become ingrained into the organizational culture. The efficacy of Cunningham’s (2009) model, however, has only been partially examined in an American university athletic department and examination in the context of something like world motorsport would only add to the strength of its standing. Findings indicated that progress was hindered by a perceived low utility of diversity, resulting in a lack of top management support and strategic integration (Cunningham, 2009). This, in turn, revealed underlying power dynamics embedded in the organizational context, an issue commonly neglected in mainstream diversity management studies.

More recently, Spaaij and colleagues (2020) noted that many sport organizations have already recognized the potential benefits of diversity, yet little has been done to ensure environments where those benefits may be realized. Although rare, empirical research has shown that the diversity rhetoric does not necessarily translate into commensurate changes in actual practices within sport organizations. Furthermore, critical scholars argue that the diversity management practices advanced in the organization development literature have not only been found generally ineffective in fostering D&I, but even counterproductive in some cases, by reinforcing power hierarchies through discursive practices of resistance. In particular, Spaaij et al. (2020) point out how leaders in sport organizations may engage in rhetoric that seems to endorse the value of diversity to actually “(re)position themselves in their privilege, and/or to mask such privilege” (p. 365).

## **An Overview**

# **Motorsport in Africa/Middle East**

The FIA has a presence in all major countries in both the Africa and Middle East regions, which has a combined population of over 1.7 billion people, with Africa alone representing almost 17% of the global population. Some of the member clubs have a long heritage, being affiliated to the FIA from the start of the last century. Both Africa and MENA are represented on the World Motorsport Council by one Vice President for each region.

While the South African GP can trace its roots back to 1934 the continent of Africa has not hosted a Formula 1 GP since 1993. Rallying has been the sport's main platform with the Safari rally dating back to 1953 and the African rally Championship running since 1981. The Middle East Rally Championship started in 1984 with Jordan hosting a World Rally Championship (WRC) in 2008. The advent of the Bahrain Grand Prix in 2004 has contributed to the growth of karting and single seat racing in the Gulf region. Abu Dhabi hosted its first GP in 2009 and Saudi Arabia will host its first GP in 2021.

It is also worthy of note in the context of Africa that the largest economy, Nigeria, is substantially underdeveloped in terms of motorsport and has recently changed the FIA affiliated member club for this reason. The new club is currently working with EMSO in the creation of a plan for motorsport talent development and clearly is worthy of urgent FIA support and focus due to its potential.

MENA hosted an inaugural regional “arrive and drive” karting cup last year for national competitors which was a success, attracting national champions from 15 countries. This will be continued in 2021. It is also significant that karting now represents the fastest growing percentage of competition licence holders in the MENA region compared to rallying a decade ago.

## Motorsport

# Role Models

Role models play an important role in the development of sport in any country and this is driven to a large extent by success and the related media coverage.

However, motorsport world champions in both Formula 1 and WRC has been dominated by Europeans who, in turn, only comprise 10% of the world population. MENA, despite hosting 15 % of 2021 events, has neither produced a F1 Champion nor even had a Formula 1 driver start a race.

Furthermore, we are unaware of any MENA citizen currently in a management or engineering positions with a F1 team. By contrast, it is worthy to note that the MENA region is well represented in Formula 1 via major sponsors including Emirates, DP World and Saudi Aramco. It would therefore be in the commercial interests of all stakeholders to have better representation from this region competing in the sport.

Africa, in particular South Africa, has a stronger engineering heritage in Formula 1 via Rory Byrne and Gordon Murray. Currently Zimbabwean Stephanie Travers is the PETRONAS Trackside Fluid Engineer, providing Mercedes-AMG PETRONAS Motorsport, with fluid support services. She is a UK graduate in chemical engineering. Furthermore, South Africa is unique in both regions in that it has manufacturing capacity in the field of Cross-Country Rallying vehicle.

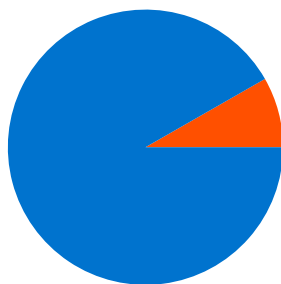
While South African Jody Scheckter won the F1 title in 1979 the continent has won no titles in the intervening period. Indeed, on the issue of diversity and inclusion the United Nations recognise 193 countries and yet the Formula 1 World Championship has only been won by drivers from 14 nations. This represents just 7% of global nation states and even this figure is substantially Eurocentric. The World Rally Championship fares worse, with World Champion titles going only to the holders of 8 different European passports.

Clearly both regions covered in the present study are substantially underrepresented in terms of driver and engineering role models for both World Championship categories.

## Research Findings

### 1. Developing Driver Talent

Respondents from the two regions (again, a reminder, that 1 response = 1 ASN) were asked their opinions on whether they felt a 'fast track' scheme, whereby driving talent from their region could be propelled, much quicker, towards world championship-style competition, would be welcomed. Whilst, perhaps not surprisingly, all of those who replied agreed that this would indeed be a positive development, it also meant that more than 9 out of 10 respondents felt confident to conclude that this would encourage more young people to consider a career in motorsport, which is an interesting consequence.

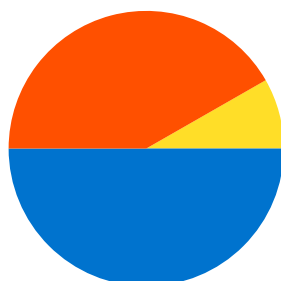


If such a scheme existed, do you think the numbers of young people from your country who would see motorsport as a viable sport to get involved in would increase?

● Yes 91.7% ● No 8.3%

### 2. The Importance of Role Models

The extant literature makes it clear just how important the presence of role models – or at the very least individuals that young people can relate to – are in convincing them that motorsport is a place where they are both welcomed and can flourish. In this regard, when the 12 ASNs were each asked their opinion on the importance of role models, in this respect, their views were predictable:

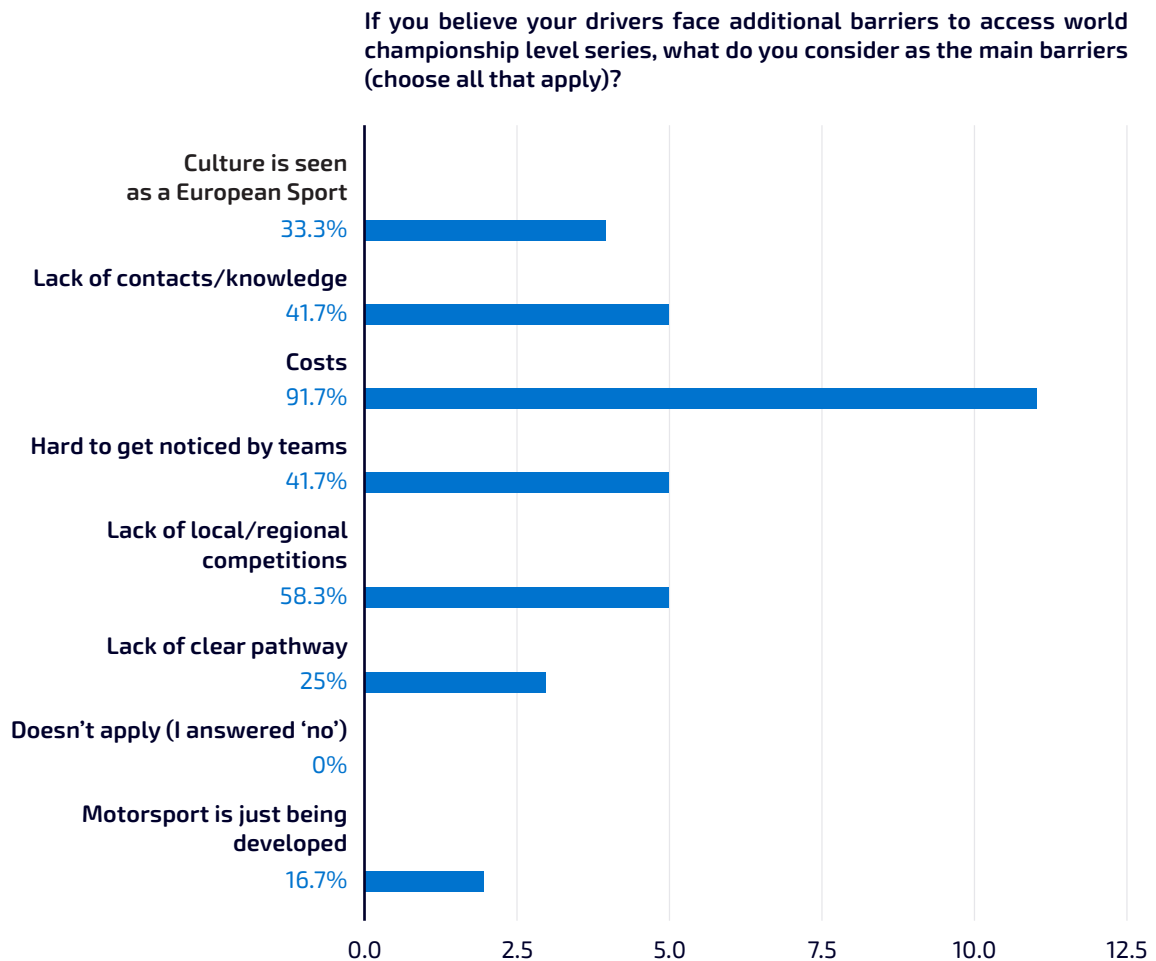


How important do you feel it is that young people, in particular, from your country, see role models to whom can relate to involved in motorsport?

● Extremely Important 50% ● Somewhat Important 8.3%  
● Important 41.7% ● Not important

### 3. Barriers to Progress within Motorsports

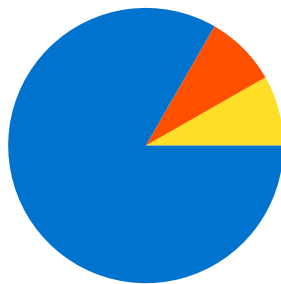
Its also an accepted reality that young drivers from certain regions do face a greater number (than average) of barriers in seeking to pursue their passion, and talent, in motorsport. Again, when asked to identify what these were, ASN's from the selected countries drew attention to several important areas:



A common theme amongst respondents was a desire to provide a national response to these issues, through education, training, collaboration and, where possible, manufacturing.

## 4. University Collaboration

For example, when asked whether their ASN would benefit from having links with a University that offers engineering degrees, where some students may have a specific interest in motorsport engineering, the views of respondents were clear:



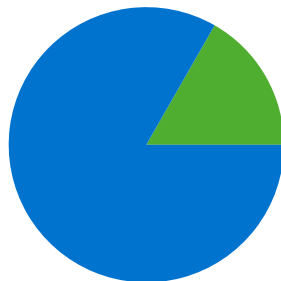
Do you feel motorsport in your country would benefit from having nationals with motorsport engineering qualifications?

● Yes 83.3%  
● No 8.4%

● Maybe 8.3%

## 5. Manufacturing Low Cost Vehicles

Similarly, if motorsport at grassroots level is to evolve, young people must have easy access to vehicles they can practice with and thereby improve their overall ability and standing. This may be made possible by putting in place a low-cost manufacturing facility in such countries, meaning an indigenous base to produce such vehicles may prove viable.



Do you feel FIA/ASN supervised local/regional manufacturing of grassroots vehicles (e.g. Cross Cars) will reduce costs of motorsport and encourage greater participation in your country?

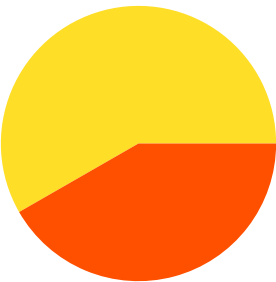
● Yes 83.3%  
● No 0%

● I don't know 0%  
● I'm not sure 16.7%



# 5. Diversity and Inclusion in Motorsports

On the central point, none of the respondents were able to state with any confidence that those governing motorsports, regionally or internationally, were sufficiently impactful in advancing diversity and inclusion initiatives.

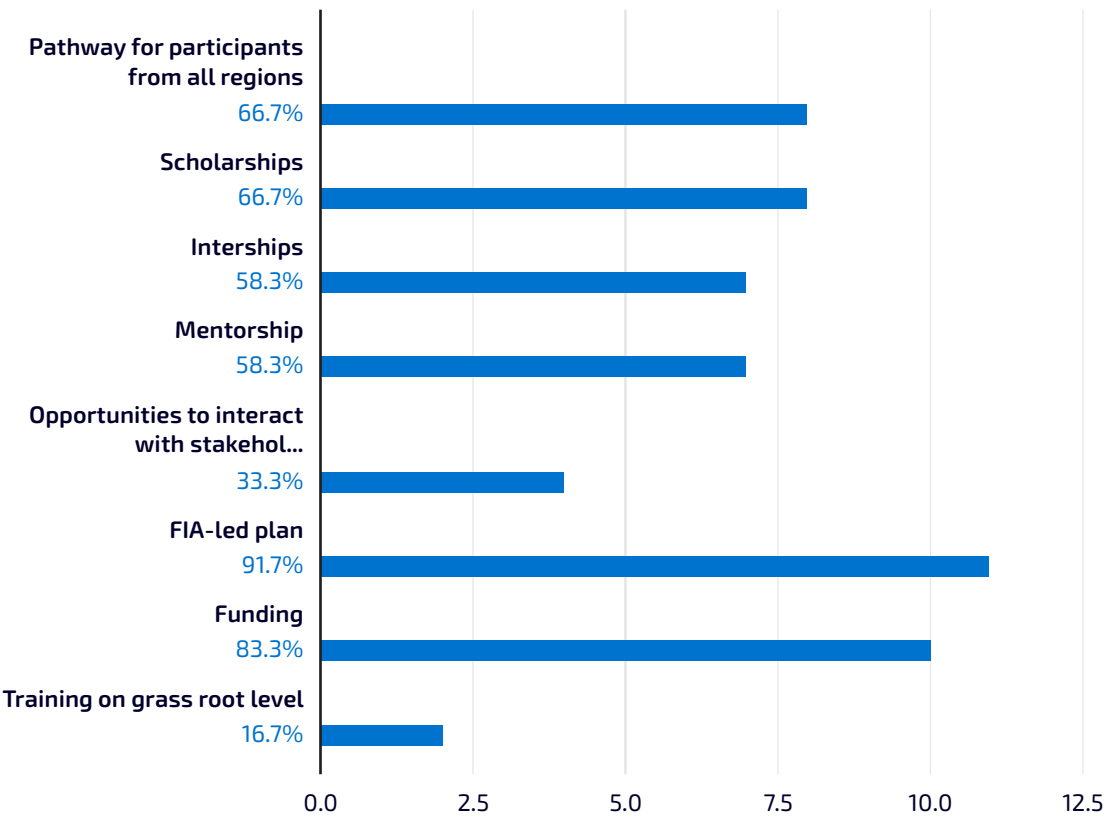


Do you think enough is done to promote Diversity & Inclusion in motorsport by all stakeholders?

● Yes 0%                      ● I'm not sure 58.3%  
● No 41.7%

In a follow-up question, its clear that ASNs see a FIA-led plan to increase diversity in motorsport supported by sufficient levels of funding to bring such plans to fruition, as the critical steps necessary to make a meaningful difference in the lived experiences of their members.

What Diversity and Inclusion initiatives would you welcome?



## Proposed Solutions

Given the limitations of the present research we have restricted our recommendations to two key areas **1) Promotion of Motorsport Engineering / STEM skills in both regions**, and **2) Development of Driving talent**. The former has received little exposure or debate as a topic in the regional motorsport community and yet is key to sustainable motorsport in the regions. The bulk of the proposals below are low cost and high impact.

The promotion of driving talent with the target of securing a more diverse Formula 1 grid is critical to the interests of all stakeholders. However, this must start at national and regional level via a formal FIA- led process to fast track talent from non-traditional motorsport markets.

## Talent Development

### 1

Grassroot development in both regions is linked to improved low cost access to vehicles. Import duties is a major barrier and local / regional production is proposed as a solution. The FIA cross car is the obvious starting point as our research indicates it can be produced for 70 % less compared to importing from Europe. This can also be linked to STEM / Engineering promotion per such vehicles, (see point 3, below) and improve Government relations by way of reducing imports. The FIA should urgently develop such a plan in conjunction with regional partners, supported by an effective promotional campaign.

### 2

It is recommended that the FIA create a pathway from National Championships, where emerging talent can develop their skills and get exposure to teams/employers, through the identifiable tiers of competitive motorsport. The MENA Karting Cup already provides a good platform on a regional level for precisely this course of action but lacks the next steps that are vital to maintain competitor involvement. It is recommended that the FIA examine a Global Academy for regional karting champions, in conjunction with the F1 promoter, to fast track the diversity process.

### 3

A regional Cross Car Cup, based on the MENA karting model, should be considered for Africa, and be linked to a Global Academy, developed in collaboration with the WRC promoter.

### 4

To ensure greater potential access for African drivers to Formula 1, it is recommended that CIK, in conjunction with regional stakeholders, publish an Africa development plan for karting within 12 months.

## STEM\* Promotion

### 1

A well promoted, annual FIA Funded scholarship scheme for developing motorsport markets through access to motorsport engineering qualifications for those applicants holding the required entry criteria e.g. MSc in Advanced Motorsport Engineering at Cranfield (see <https://www.cranfield.ac.uk/courses/taught/advanced-motorsport-engineering>) should be considered. Fees GBP 10,500 per student (at present).

### 2

Working with the F1 and WRC promoters and Universities, a structured series of student pre /post event workshops should be instigated, which would see engineering students offered workshops/lectures provided by competing teams. Specifically, this process should begin at the 2021 F1 Grand Prix at Abu Dhabi, Bahrain and KSA and the WRC event in Nairobi and be reviewed after each exercise to improve its overall effectiveness. Cost minimal.

### 3

The local production of grassroots vehicles e.g., Cross Cars is a critical step to reduce costs and improve young driver access and should be pursued immediately. It also represents an opportunity to promote STEM skills in the region under FIA supervision and member clubs and should, ideally, be linked to a FIA Engineering certificate for successful graduates. Cost minimal.

*\*Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics*

## New Grand Prix – Legacy

### 1

It is recommended that as part of the negotiations for any future Grand Prix that the FIA, Promoter, and local stakeholders agree a national legacy plan focused on the development of national racing talent. Furthermore, that a small percentage, perhaps 2 % of the fee, be allocated to the management and execution of this plan, which should have clear KPIs. This will not only assist the diversity project identified here but also ensure that the events are sustainable in terms of domestic public, media, and sponsor interest. Consideration should be given to commencing this initiative with the new Saudi Arabia GP in 2021.

## Study

# Conclusion

The research indicates that Formula 1 and WRC has, for much of their respect histories, been highly Eurocentric. Furthermore, it confirms that Drivers, Engineers, and other professionals across both the Middle East and Africa regions face a range of significant barriers to access the top level of the sport. It can be argued with a high degree of confidence that other regions outside the traditional European markets face similar barriers, including the Americas, Ex-CIS countries and Asia.

While this important issue is without question a medium to long term process, this research was commissioned to be solution and action focused. It is our view that the process should start in 2021 as all recommendations outlined above are manageable within existing budgets and simply require a willingness on the part of the parties concerned to make them happen.

Clearly further research is required, and the development of a global FIA led plan in conjunction with all stakeholders to be executed from 2022, represents the next logical step in this process.



# Diversity & Inclusion Study 2021

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